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11 March 2015

Mr Simon Gallacher  
Headteacher  
St Anthony's Catholic Primary School  
High Busy Lane  
ShIPLEY  
West Yorkshire  
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Dear Mr Gallacher

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Bradford**

Following my visit to your school on 10 March 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- fill the current governor vacancies to ensure that the governing body is able to sustain the capacity to successfully hold school leaders at all levels to account for the standards pupils reach
- develop the tracking of impact of the provision made for disadvantaged pupils.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, middle and senior leaders, groups of pupils, the school council and governors. In addition, the inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. She undertook a learning walk with the headteacher that included visiting all classes and some work scrutiny. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The reviews of governance and pupil premium spending were both scrutinised.

## **Context**

Since the last section 5 inspection there has been no change in staffing.

## **Main findings**

Leaders, governors and the local authority all agree that the findings and issues identified during the section 5 inspection are the right ones. The school improvement plan has rightly prioritised actions linked to improving teaching, learning and the progress pupils make. Milestones and success criteria are in place and these are shared and reviewed with governors.

Subject leaders are receiving training about their roles and have carried out some monitoring activities to check the quality of marking and feedback to pupils as well as the quality of their work. Marking and feedback have been reviewed and new guidelines agreed. Regular marking happens, but this is not routinely leading to deeper learning or understanding. Pupils say they like their books being marked regularly, but that sometimes the work they do is too easy.

The school is working with independent consultants and partner schools to improve the teaching of English and mathematics. Leaders' tracking of pupils' progress shows where the school's efforts need to be intensified, particularly in Key Stage 1 but also in higher level writing and mathematics across the school. There is greater regularity and emphasis placed on moderation, both internal and external. This currently focuses on writing but leaders recognise that this process needs to be developed across mathematics and reading. The level of challenge in lessons is not consistently high enough to promote accelerated progress. In part, this is because pupils are not always given the right level of work to build on their previous understanding. In addition, pupils were seen to be waiting for help from their teacher and this led to lost learning time.

In mathematics, number and calculation are a daily focus with the recent introduction of early morning sessions for all pupils. These are well attended and enjoyed by the pupils. Strategies to engage pupils as writers are being implemented across the school but do not, at this early stage, focus on providing challenge for the more-able. Across the school, leaders recognise the need for teachers to plan for greater challenge. Senior leaders are proactive in identifying children who may need extra support and deliver some of this themselves in support groups after school. In line with the new National Curriculum, a new approach to planning lessons for different stages, 'learning, consolidating and applying', is helping to focus teachers on pupils' individual needs. However, pupils are not certain what this new approach means for their learning.

Staff in the Early Years Reception class are working with an experienced teacher from a partner school to begin to address some of the issues identified in the report.

There are now more opportunities for learning across the provision. A sustained programme of support is in place, but the plan for improvement lacks tight enough accountability to ensure time is not lost in driving forward change. External quality assurance is insufficient to ensure targets for improvement are met and early indications of progress are sustained and accelerated.

Additional senior leaders have been appointed internally to increase leadership capacity. A key part of their role is the moderation of teachers' assessments of the standard of pupils' work. There is an established monitoring cycle that senior leaders are fully involved in, but this is not the case for all middle leaders. Recognised and established leadership training is valued by middle leaders and they can describe how this is supporting their development.

Initially, leaders have taken a measured approach to school improvement. They have focused on establishing non-negotiables in the first instance. However, the level of expectation for the impact of teaching on pupils' learning is not high enough or urgent enough to bring about the changes required. The pace of change and the quality assurance of the changes in teaching and learning needs to quicken.

A review of the allocation and impact of pupil premium funding has recently been carried out. It identifies areas for development including further evaluation of the impact of spending on the progress of these pupils to ensure that they catch up quickly.

An external review of governance has taken place. Governors now receive regular and detailed information from school leaders. A revised committee structure and regular visits to school, for instance to take part in a scrutiny of pupils' work, ensure that governors have a clearer insight into the strengths and areas for development for the school. This enables them to monitor the impact of the school's work and to challenge senior leaders more effectively.

The governing body and school leaders have worked hard to recruit new governors but with limited success, so three vacancies remain. This impacts on the work of the governing body, as there are too few people to share responsibilities and sustain improvements. However, the skills and understanding of governors are developing so their ability to hold leaders to account is growing and the review clearly directs their next steps. A working party has been formed to share in the writing of the school vision; training has been delivered by the local authority with regards to induction and school data.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

## **External support**

The headteacher and staff are drawing well on the partnerships established locally, both with the diocese and local schools. In addition, the headteacher has attended the Ofsted 'getting to good' seminar.

The local authority has supported the school in facilitating an audit of governance and worked with senior leaders to determine how this will become the action plan for the development of the governing body.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Bradford and the Diocese of Leeds.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Wiles

**Associate Inspector**

*Appointed as an Additional Inspector, under the powers relating to additional inspectors, in paragraph 11 of Part 2 of Schedule 12 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006*